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A HOMELY HEROINE.

'WHAT can hae come owre Archie?' murmured Kirstie Brydone, as, for the twentieth time that day, she rose and went to the cottage-door to look for her husband. It was between two and three on the afternoon of Hogmanay, the last day of the year. On every side undulating ranges of hills met her eye, and seemed to close in the wide valley from the world beyond. The sun was low in the west, enveloped in a strange reddish haze; behind the hills to the north, great masses of heavy clouds were rolling up, piled one above another; a bitter icy wind whistled down the valley, bearing on its wings an occasional snow-flake; while to the south the great range of hills rose up, clear and distinct in their slight mantle of snow, against the purplish sky. Kirstie looked round in all directions, but could see nothing of her husband, who had been absent since the early morning, and saying to herself: 'I wish I saw him safe hame; it's gaun to be a wild night, I doubt,' she closed the door, and returned to the fireside. She put on some more peats, made herself certain that the kettle was boiling, so that she might 'mask' the tea as soon as Archie came in; then, drawing forward the little table which was all ready set for tea, she sat down on a low chair, and resumed her occupation of rocking the cradle. As she bent over the fair little baby it contained, the firelight lit up a very homely face; a mouth rivalling in width the famous Meg of Harden's; small gray eyes, and a low forehead; and yet the face was not without its redeeming points. The large mouth disclosed two rows of pearly teeth; the eyes were frank and sweet, with a confiding trustfulness in them; and the forehead was crowned with masses of thick soft brown hair. She was remarkably tall, nearly six feet, and splendidly proportioned, with the exception of her arms, which were rather long. And at the time of her marriage—just a year before this—there were many jokes passed upon the fact that she was two or three inches taller than her husband, who was little and slight, with a fair boyish face, which made him look

younger than Kirstie, though he was twenty-five, and she was only twenty-two. Archie Brydone let them laugh away, and could well afford to do so, for none knew so well as himself what a treasure he had got in this homely wife of his.

When Kirstie was a little lassie of eight years old, her father and mother died of fever within a few weeks of each other, and left her a friendless orphan. Strangely enough, her father, who was a shepherd also, had had this very herding of Dyne-foot, and the cottage to which she returned as a bride, was the same in which she had passed a happy childhood. Mr Gray, the farmer of Auchensack, her father's master, took her to the farmhouse, and there she remained till she was married, first as a little herd-girl, then as nurse to the children, and finally as dairymaid. It was during the two or three summers which she spent herding the cows that she first knew Archie Brydone. He was a delicate puny boy, who even then looked young for his years, and his parents feared at one time that he was going to be lame, though he grew out of it afterwards. His father had taken a dairy on the neighbouring farm of Barbreck, and Archie was set to the task of herding, a very necessary one in those great stretches of moorland and pasture, where there were few, if any, proper fences.

In their pastoral employment the two children became inseparable companions. Archie was a smart boy, and a good reader, and many a lesson he gave Kirstie, who was a diligent, though not very apt pupil, for at all times of her life her heart was infinitely greater than her intellect. At other times he would read aloud to her, while she worked her stocking; and sheltered by an old plaid, which preserved them alike from sun, wind, and rain, they passed many happy hours. Finally, Archie thought he must learn to 'weave' stockings for himself, and, under Kirstie's tuition, soon became nearly as clever at it as she was herself; and so her dream of a companion-knitter under the rowan-tree was realised, though very differently from what she anticipated, as dreams so often are.

Two happy summers passed in this way, and then Archie, having outgrown his lameness, was

sent away to farm-service; and when he became older, went to the Highlands as a shepherd. For two or three years his father and mother remained at Barbreck dairy, and Kirstie heard of him occasionally from them; but eventually they went to a large dairy down in Galloway, and for several years she did not know whether he were dead or alive; but she did not forget him, and on fine Sunday afternoons in summer, sometimes walked as far as the rowan-tree, with which he was inseparably associated.

A great surprise was in store for her, however, for he came back to Mr Gray's as young herd. Kirstie had not heard the name of the young man who was coming, indeed had heard nothing about him, except that he was coming from the Highlands. She was in the kitchen alone when he came in; it was dusk, and she did not recognise his voice; but the firelight was shining full upon her as she stood making the porridge, in the cook's absence; and after a minute's quiet survey, he was certain that this tall girl, with the grand figure and plain face, was no other than his old friend Kirstie.

'Do ye ever herd the coos for onybody, nowadays, Kirstie?' he said at length, very quietly.

'Preserve us a'!' exclaimed Kirstie, nearly upsetting the porridge in her agitation; then, as the fire blazed up, and disclosed the fair curly head and merry blue eyes she remembered so well, she said with tearful eyes and trembling voice: 'Can this be you, Archie Brydone? Glad am I to see ye back again. But what a start ye gied me, for mony's the time I've wondered if ye were alive.'

'Alive and hearty,' replied Archie, with rather a forced laugh, to hide the emotion he really felt when he saw how agitated she was. 'But the truth is, I wearied o' the Highlands; it's a dull thing being one's lane in a house for months, and I thoct I would try the Low Country again.'

Archie was surprised to find, as time passed on, and he and Kirstie dropped into their old friendly terms, how little changed she was in mind from what she used to be; the same simple, guileless creature, strong as a rock for truth and right, and thoroughly unselfish.

Mr and Mrs Gray were so much attached to her that they looked on her almost as a child of the house, and yet she was so unconscious of any special favour, that she quite avoided all jealousy on the part of her fellow-servants. Archie staid steadily on at Auchensack, and became almost as much a part of the household as Kirstie; the other servants went and came, but these two remained fixtures.

When Archie had been three years with Mr Gray, the shepherd at Dynefoot left to take a small farm, and Mr Gray offered it to Archie, adding, with a sly glance, that he would have to look out for a wife in that case. Archie thanked him, and asked for a few days to think of it, which Mr Gray willingly granted. That was on a Saturday; and on the afternoon of the Sunday, which was a bright September day, Archie asked Kirstie if she would take a walk with him to the rowan-tree; and there, at the place where they first met, and where they had played and worked as children, he asked her if she would be his life-long companion. No one can doubt what Kirstie's

answer was; he had been the one love of her childhood and of her later years, and the sun never shone upon a prouder, happier bride.

It was an additional source of happiness, too, the fact that they were to live in her old home, though many a one would have thought it a solitary place enough. It was three miles from Auchensack, and about as far from the nearest shepherd's house, and was away quite up among the hills, commanding a splendid view of one of the loveliest of the lovely Dumfriesshire valleys. It was a roomy, comfortable cottage, white-washed, with a thatched roof, a nice garden in front, and two elm-trees at one side. Inside, it was the picture of comfort; the kitchen especially, with its sanded floor clean as hands could make it; the dresser gay with willow-pattern plates and many coloured bowls and 'pigs';* the long settle by the fire; and the antique clock, which had belonged to Kirstie's grandfather. It stood just about a hundred yards from the mouth of the deep, dark, precipitous glen which took its name from the Dyne, a little burn which brawled along at the foot.

Archie entered on his duties at Martinmas, and they were married on the Hogmanay following, at Auchensack, when there was a dance in the barn and general merry-making. And so time had slipped away, every season seeming happier than the last, Kirstie thought, and happiest of all, the dark days of winter, since a little blossom came upon a November day, and filled their cup of happiness to overflowing. It was a lovely, fair little infant, with Archie's blue eyes, and flaxen hair; and he was, if possible, more passionately fond of it than Kirstie herself.

Kirstie thought of her happy lot, with a deep unutterable thankfulness, as she sat absently rocking the cradle. She was one of those women who have great difficulty of utterance, whose words are few, but their thoughts many, and above all, her religion was truly a part of herself and of her daily life. The sun had now set, and darkness was coming on, while the wind whistled more shrilly than ever, and with an eerie sound, which made her shudder. She was becoming really anxious about Archie's long-continued absence. He had left home in the morning with the first peep of daylight to climb the hill, according to his custom, and intended to come home, as he usually did, about eleven.

She tried, meanwhile, to calm her anxiety by thinking that something might have happened to one of the sheep, or that he might have been detained, gathering them into the folds in preparation for an approaching storm. At length, she heard the dog scratching at the door; and joyfully said she to herself: 'He canna be far off noo;' but on opening the door, the dog, instead of running joyfully to the fire, or curling himself up beneath one of the beds, as he usually did, began to jump fawningly upon her, and to whine pitifully: she could not understand the reason of this at all, when suddenly an idea burst upon her mind, which speedily became a certainty. Archie was ill, had hurt himself, perhaps, somewhere on the hills, and the dog had come for help. She shook a deadly faintness which crept over her at the thought; and rousing herself, she drew the fire together, in case of sparks, placed the cradle

* Crookery.

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on one of the beds for safety, and throwing a plaid about her, followed the dog.

During these preparations, 'Laddie' had stood still and motionless as a statue; but when she moved towards the door he jumped with delight, fawned upon her, and licked her hands, and then bounded hastily forwards in the direction of the glen. The ordinary route along Glen Dyne was to climb the steep hill which rose behind Dynefoot, and then to keep by a footpath which wound along the top of the glen for about a mile. There was no fence or protection whatever; and there were several sad stories told of people who had missed their footing, or, in the darkness, had wandered too near the edge, and so had come to a violent end. Just two winters before this, an unfortunate man had perished not far from the mouth of the glen. He was a packman, with a donkey, who was well known at all the farm-houses; and was, in his way, a well-to-do man, with a well-assorted pack, the contents of which ranged from ribbons and jewellery to note-paper, hair-pins, and staylaces. In fact, it was designed to supply all the little wants of a female population, who were seldom able to indulge in the luxury of going a-shopping. Tom Carson the packman was therefore a great favourite, and not only because of his wares, but because he was a cheery, pleasant fellow; and Kirstie remembered well what consternation was caused in the kitchen at Auchensack when a rumour arose that Tom Carson had disappeared; and it was thought that some one must have made away with him, for the sake of his pack, which, as it was new year's time, was unusually heavy. It was only conjecture, however, for nothing could be heard of him; but when at last the snow, which lay that winter for several weeks, had melted, the mystery was solved, and poor Tom Carson, with his donkey and his pack, were found at the bottom of Glen Dyne. It was supposed that he had been coming to Auchensack, where he was a great favourite—that he had been overtaken by the storm—that the donkey had lost its footing, and in his efforts to save the poor animal, he had perished along with it. It was a sad story, and cast a deeper shade of gloom over Glen Dyne, which indeed bore no good name already. As Kirstie toiled up the hill, it all came back appallingly afresh to her memory.

About half-way up the steep precipitous side of the glen, there ran a very narrow, insecure footpath called the 'Tod's Path,' owing to a fox-burrow up near the head of the glen. Few people ever ventured along it, except the gamekeepers and the shepherds, and even they did not care to try it except in broad daylight. At the point where this path turned off from the face of the hill, 'Laddie' began again to jump upon his mistress, then running a few steps along the path and coming back, he wagged his tail and looked up at her with beseeching eyes, saying, as plainly as dog could say, in his mute but expressive language: 'Come this way.' Kirstie did not hesitate to follow, bad though the way was, for it led, she was sure, to her husband; and besides, as a little child she used often to come with her father before she knew what fear was, and therefore knew every turn and bend in the path. Toiling up the wild solitude, her feelings overcame her, and unconsciously forced from her lips the cry: 'O Archie, Archie, my man, where are ye?'

Just at this point, a little runlet of water which came down from the hill had spread itself across the path in a solid sheet of ice. Kirstie hesitated, but there was no other way; it was life or death, and she must hasten on: so she did cross, but her foot slipped, and she narrowly escaped falling. The snow now began to fall more quickly and in large flakes, and she had to trust more to memory for the path than actual sight. On and on she went, however, till she had gone nearly a mile up the glen, when suddenly 'Laddie' gave a short joyful bark, and she saw a dark object stretched across the path. It was indeed Archie; he was leaning against a large stone which seemed to have broken his fall; his hair was powdered with snow, his face was white and rigid, and his lips were livid. Kirstie never doubted but that he was dead, and threw herself on the ground beside him, with a cry of agony; when suddenly his eyes opened—a conscious look came into his face, and he said in faint, low tones: 'Is that you, Kirstie? I thoct I was gaun to dee my lane, and never see ye mair.'

'Oh, wheest, Archie, wheest,' she wailed; 'ye'll break my heart; dinna speak that way.'

He continued, after a moment's pause: 'I slipped at the tap o' the brae, and I maun hae dwamed,* for I wakened as cauld as a stane wi' Laddie licking my face; so I sent him hame, purr beast. No help could do me guid now, Kirstie,' he said, as if in answer to the thoughts which were passing through her mind at the moment. 'My leg is broken; and I've hurt my side; and wi' the darkness and the storm, there's nobody fit to help me, gin they were here; and it wad be hours before onybody could come. O Kirstie, woman, I maun leave ye and the wee bairn,' he added with a choking sob.

Kirstie did not answer for a moment; and then her face was lighted up with a look of high resolve, and she said: 'Mony a time, Archie, have I wondered why the Lord gied me my great strength and my lang arms, but I see it now; and if it be His will, I will save you this nicht.'

'Ye're no fit to carry me,' Archie remonstrated feebly; 'and think what a road, Kirstie.'

'Do I no ken the road better than ony herd in the country?' she replied; 'and we maun ask for help higher than man's.'

As she knelt beside her husband, with the snow falling on her upturned face, and the wild wind whistling round, and in few and simple words, as if she were speaking to a near and loving friend, asked the aid of the Almighty arm to guide her on her perilous way, and keep her feet from falling, Archie Brydone, even in the midst of all his pain and weakness, felt that he had never before truly known his wife. She then lifted Archie, as gently and tenderly as she could; but he gave a deep groan, and she found that he had fainted quite away. 'Maybe it's better,' she murmured; 'he winna know, till the danger's past.' Then, with another upward glance for help, she set out on her dangerous way. It would, by this time, have been perfectly dark, but there was a little moonlight, just enough to shew the mere outline of the path and the glen. The path itself was, by this time, quite covered with snow; every step was taken in uncertainty; she hardly knew if she were keeping the path at all. Strong as she was, she staggered

* Fainted.

at times under her burden, while everything around looked wild and weird in the half-darkness and the thick-falling snow. 'Laddie' trotting in front of her, and guiding her on her way, was the only gleam of comfort she had. She went along more by instinct than sight, and after a weary while, she began to think that she must be coming near the mouth of the glen, when suddenly she remembered the sheet of ice across the pathway. If she could hardly cross it then, what was to become of her now, with a heavy burden, and the snow covering the path, so that she could not tell where she was going? Her heart sank within her; she remembered that it was near that very spot that poor Tom Carson was killed, and she felt as if she could not move another step. Just at this moment a ray of moonlight pierced through the drift, and shewed her young Archie's head resting on her shoulder; the face was more boyish than ever in its pallor, and the rings of fair hair lay damp on his forehead. New strength seemed to come to her arms with the sight, and new courage and faith to her heart, and she went bravely on a few more steps, and then, to her joy and surprise, found herself safe out on the hillside, and far past the dangerous place. She had passed it safely and quietly, not knowing of the danger till it was gone. She had the wind to contend with now, and the snowdrift in her face; but in her thankfulness, she felt as if she could overcome everything, and soon was within a few yards of their own door. Then her strength utterly failed; she struggled with beating heart and labouring breath against her weakness, as if it were some physical obstacle; and she did manage, though how she never knew, to reach the house, enter the door, place Archie on the long settle by the fireside, and then—fell on the floor perfectly unconscious. Poor 'Laddie' ran from one to another, not knowing what was the matter, and howling pitifully, while the baby was wailing in the cradle. Help, however, was near at hand, and in a few minutes two men from Auchensack entered the cottage. They had been sent rather against their will, and felt as if they were on a wild-goose chase; but when they arrived at the house, they were horrified with the state of matters, and thankful that a childish fancy—as they thought it at first—should have been the means of bringing them to Dynefoot so opportunely.

The children at Auchensack were extremely fond of Kirstie, and it was a favourite amusement of theirs, every afternoon, as the dusk came on, to watch for the light appearing in her window. When long after the usual time, none appeared, they could not understand it at all; the anniversary of her wedding-day too: what could be the matter? At last, Mr and Mrs Gray became uneasy themselves, and sent off the two men, who arrived at the very time when their help was most needed.

Archie 'came to' after a little; but nothing they could do had any effect in rousing Kirstie; so one of them went back to Auchensack, and from there was sent on for the doctor. Poor man, he was just sitting down to supper, at a cosy little party, which had assembled to see the 'old year out and the new year in,' when he was told that the shepherd at Dynefoot had had a bad fall in the glen, and his wife was 'near deid' with carrying him home.

'Carrying him home,' said one of the company

incredulously; 'why, it is impossible: the woman must be an Amazon.'

'So she is, both in body and soul,' replied the doctor, who had known her for years; 'and as it is on her account and her husband's, I don't mind the long ride over the snow one bit; so, good-night, and a happy new year to you all.'

Kirstie was not 'near deid,' but she got a great shake, and for some time was graver and quieter than her wont; as if the wings of the Angel of Death had really passed closely by her. One lasting trace she had of her exertions that night—her pretty brown hair was ever after thickly streaked with gray.

Archie, after being ill for a long time, became eventually quite strong and hearty again; but all his life after was influenced by that wild night in Glen Dyne, and the lesson in simple faith taught him by his wife.

When the 'Laird' came to Auchensack, next autumn, for the shooting, he was so pleased to hear of Kirstie's exploit, knowing the glen well, as he did, that he gave the cottage at Dynefoot to her and Archie for their lifetime, promising to build one, if required, for another shepherd. Kirstie was amazed beyond measure with this gift, and it was a mystery to her why people called her a 'heroine.'

GERMAN AND ITALIAN VAGRANTS.

ENGLAND has enough of painful sights of native origin without needing the importation of what is disagreeable. We do not now happen to see homeless mendicant negroes, such as occasionally cast up as refugees during the existence of slavery in the West Indies. From France, at successive political convulsions, we get a fair share of voluntary exiles, sufficient to keep up the stock of swarthy foreigners about Leicester Square, who, though not all that one could wish, live, on the whole, very peaceably, and somehow, after a time, either return home or melt away into the general population. A greatly more annoying set of exotics are German brass bands, who perambulate town and country, too frequently making dreadful noises on trumpets of all shapes and sizes, performing some kind of tunes, which they expect to be rewarded for by donations of white money. These German bands, dressed sometimes in a kind of slop uniform, are seen in various countries of Europe and America. Neither hill nor sea stops them. France, since the war, has, for sufficient reasons, not been honoured with their presence. But Italy has. You will meet them in easy pedestrian fashion crossing the Splügen. They are seen in Palermo, in the Chiaia at Naples, in the Isle of Skye, and the streets of New York and Chicago—everywhere, night and day, intent on pestering mankind with their usually hideous tunes and gathering sixpences. Carrying no luggage, and not at all nice as to lodgings, they are ready, like nomadic gypsies, to sleep in barns, in the holds of ships, or anywhere. Christendom, with a groan, submits to the visitation—a calamity which can no more be helped than the arrival of cholera, or any other migratory epidemic.

Where these German musicians come from, is a

mystery. Are they detachments of the Prussian *Landwehr* out on a ramble, or what? As curiosities in anthropology, one would like to know something definite about them. Theirs is a pleasant, rollicking sort of life, with the happy consciousness that wherever they pitch their camp, they will be paid to go away about their business with their fantastic instruments. Only one thing has vexed them in their wanderings. They have not the field to themselves. Rivals in the art of distracting ears and extorting coppers and sixpences meet them on their own ground in all quarters. This is a serious hardship. In London and other large towns, they cannot but consider it an injustice that their scientific snorting and grunting on French horns should, in a mendicancy point of view, have to compete with the basely mechanical grinding by Italians on barrel-organs and hurdy-gurdies. It will, therefore, be acceptable news for these ubiquitous German performers to know that the civilised world is about to be quit of the hurdy-gurdyists and other juvenile Italians in the begging line, who divert from them so much of what they believe to be their own proper due. In the prospect of this relief, we beg to sympathise, though on different grounds. We shall be rid of a spectacle of misery, as well as of at least one department of street nuisances; and in time, if it please Bismark—for we have nobody else to look to—we may possibly see an end put to the other.

It has never been alleged that our German tormentors are in the category of slaves sent out by tyrannical masters on a plundering expedition. That is something in their favour. They apparently go about as independent excursionists, no one else being implicated in their financial proceedings. All the cash they scrape together is presumed kept to themselves, with a view to retiring on a genteel competency, after a few agreeable strolls round the world. Their street rivals, the Italian youths, are on a different footing. They come as slaves owned by rapacious task-masters, who carry them about from place to place to beg money, which they are obliged to render up on demand. In the looks and behaviour of these poor beings is seen none of the audacity of the free German rovers. There is about them a certain characteristic timidity. Wearing they are, no doubt, with their incessant grinding; but they do not importune outright. They have not the Teutonic fortitude to ring bells and knock at doors, asking for a benefaction; but rather hang about, waiting to excite compassion. Such is the visible difference between German and Italian street musicians.

The practice of deporting boys from Italy on begging excursions was never legalised. It sprang up when the country was divided into several petty states, and little attention was paid to the general welfare of the people. In the pinched circumstances of the small cultivators on the flanks of the Apennines, and the slight prospect of any improvement of their condition, they felt it to be a relief to get rid of some of their children. They did not absolutely sell them, for that would have been revolting even to their blunted feelings, besides being illegal, but they too easily listened to proposals to take the children off their hands in the quality of apprentices for a specified term of years. At about eight years of age, when able to undergo some fatigue and take care of themselves, the little fellows, with their swarthy complexion

and poor garb, were, on some kind of promises as to good treatment, handed over to the tender mercies of as great a set of ruffians as ever dealt in negroes from Zanzibar or the Gold Coast. Carried off, they were never more seen by parents or any one interested in them. In the cottages among the hills of Parma and Luca, mothers may have sighed to know the fate and the whereabouts of the little boys they had credulously parted with, but they sighed in vain. The little exiles had parted for ever from the old homes in the Apennines, and were dressing their sad weird in the far distant lands to which, for the sake of gain, they had been heartlessly carried.

Genoa, as we understand, has been a principal outpost for this species of traffic. Just as Scotch boys, after being kidnapped (with the covert knowledge of magistrates), were long ago shipped off in cargoes from Aberdeen to the North American Plantations, so have these small Italian boys in our own times been carried away in batches from Genoa, and landed in England and other countries, to beg in the streets for the merciless men to whom they are lucklessly assigned. Pure mendicancy, as they well know, would be speedily checked. The wretches who carry on the business have accordingly resorted to colourable methods of industry wherewith to employ their victims. The lesser boys are sent out to shew tame white mice, or that more interesting rodent, a marmot, half-way between a rabbit and a rat, which needs no cage, but nestles in the bosom, and acquires an affection for its juvenile exhibitor. Who among us have not seen the poor little white mice and marmot boys, crouching timidly along the pavement, in the hope of having bestowed on them a small coin in pity to their beseeching eyes—a coin, not for themselves, but the master who empties their pockets, beats them if unsuccessful, and barely gives them the means of keeping soul and body together!

Advancing a stage, if he does not die in the meantime from hard usage, the white-mouse boy is promoted to the hurdy-gurdy, care being taken to keep up a certain foreign look about him, as it helps to interest those who condescend to listen to his jerking, bizzing kind of music. So far initiated in grinding, and grown somewhat, more from good temper than good feeding, he is qualified to handle an organ, and is launched as a professed rival to the German bands, working his way through the streets, and by-and-by getting a notion of what houses are inclined to patronise his efforts. With an experience in popular musical tastes, which, strange to say, the Germans seldom acquire, he knows the class of tunes that will give satisfaction, and his organ is constructed accordingly. Villainous as are the proprietors of organ-boys, they have, at all events, a knowledge of what will please, and do not drive householders distracted with tunes which are little else than an inharmonious series of snorts and groans which not many can relish or understand. In some few cases, the organ-boy outlives his so-called apprenticeship, and sets up business on his own account, getting credit for an organ that plays popular airs from the builders of these instruments, or hiring one for the day. In other cases, he falls into the trade of selling stucco images, though that is rather in a declining way, which may be regretted, for, poor as was the material of this mimic statuary, the diffusion of

such articles among a humble class of dwellings could not but have a certain elevating effect.

Unfortunately, few of the boys carried off from Italy live to be independent labourers in this or any other country. The hardships they endure amidst a people with whose language they are unfamiliar, cause them to die early, making way for fresh importations. Such is an outline of this odious white slave-trade in the heart of Europe, which might have gone on uninterruptedly without serious challenge, but for a new variety of cruelty. This was the deportation of Italian girls on a similarly pretended contract of apprenticeship; the results which followed so great an iniquity being such as requires no brilliant imagination to picture. Scandalised by this addition to old practices, consuls and respectable Italian residents in England have aided in the clamour to redress the wrongs inflicted on boys as well as girls. Much to its credit, the parliament of Italy, as reported by the press, have before them a bill to abolish the system of apprenticing children of less than eighteen years of age to strolling trades or professions, such as mountebanks, jugglers, charlatans, rope-dancers, fortune-tellers, expounders of dreams, itinerant musicians, vocalists or instrumentalists, exhibitors of animals, and mendicants of every description, at home or abroad, under a penalty of from two pounds to ten pounds for each offence, and from one to three months' imprisonment. It is to be trusted that this will shortly become law, and so put an end to one of the most crying evils of our time. W. C.

LADY LIVINGSTON'S LEGACY.

CHAPTER XL.—OFF ANTICOSTI.

OUTWARD bound, the good steam-ship *Quebec* went gallantly cleaving the waves of the Atlantic. Hers had been no fair-weather passage, no holiday trip, such as those quick summer runs between the Old World and the New, that form the delight of tourists, and win the eulogies of those to whom a cabin is a torture-chamber, and Neptune a grand inquisitor, fertile in devising torments for his sea-sick vassals. In mid-ocean, the *Quebec* had had to do battle for her life against an enemy powerful enough to test the toughness of her build, and the skill and daring of her captain and her crew. Caught in the wide-sweeping net of a giant cyclone, she had undergone such a buffeting as old sailors see but rarely in their seafaring career; and for many hours it had seemed as if the existence of vessel and ship's company hung by a thread, but she had struggled through the tempest without foundering. Then it was, with an ink-black sky above, with the deafening roar of the great storm, filling the murky air with a sound which superstition might easily liken to the rush and flapping of monstrous wings, as if some demon-brood were at large upon the deep, that it was seen of what quality men and women were.

On board of the *Quebec* were sundry persons of both sexes—of the masculine gender mostly—who kept up a goodly appearance before the world. There were fine old men; vigorous, argumentative persons in the prime of life; slapdash young fellows who doffed the world aside, and bade it pass. There were also dashing specimens of the girl of the period; iron-bound, tight-jawed old maids, encyclopedias of knowledge; matrons puffed up

with social dignity and moral pride, unconsciously imitating the frog in *Æsop's* vulgar fable. It was not these, among the passengers, who bore up the best in the hour of danger. Nor, among the fore-castle Jacks, the firemen, deck-hands, and stokers, was it the brawling braggart, always in hot water when ashore, and whose fines for assaults and damaged glass were a heavy tax on his monthly wages, who was readiest to reduce sail, or to bear a hand at the wheel, when the decks were deluged by the clear green water breaking over rail and bulwark, and when boats were torn from the davits, and hen-coops full of cackling poultry, spars, rope-coils, and miscellaneous lumber, washed out to sea. Does any one suppose that in India, when the hostile cannon are nimbly served, and the horse-hoofs of the enemy's cavalry raise a miniature dust-storm, through which are dimly visible turbaned heads and glinting spear-points, and the foe come swarming in their strength, and the fire is hot, and the odds fearful, that it is the loud, dissipated, young officer, or the pompous, red-faced oracle of the mess-table, to whom the men turn for guidance? No; the true captain, the born leader, turns out to be some quiet, thoughtful fellow, of no account at ball and race-course, who springs forward when seniors fall or flinch, and whom, as if by instinct, the soldiers follow, modest and unassuming though he be, into the very jaws of death.

No one on board of the *Quebec* gave proof of a more impassible courage than did a young passenger, going out, under custody of the police, to take her trial at Montreal on a charge of murder. How had times changed with her since, less than a year ago, she had crossed to Europe in the same ship in which she was now a disgraced captive! Under the dreadful circumstances of her position, she demeaned herself as few others could have done, almost winning belief in her innocence from those who marked her simple dignity of bearing. When first the hideous charge was brought against her in England, she had scarcely made so much as a protest against its truth. It was different now. Calmly and firmly she had made her stand before the magistrate's petty tribunal in London. The Treasury lawyers, while agreeing that they had no choice but to send her for trial to the Dominion, had been staggered in their suspicions of her by the noble gentleness with which she endured the venomous verbal assaults of her foe and accuser, Aphrodite Larpent. There was now no petulance, no terror, nothing such as we are all prone to associate with the idea of a detected criminal.

Before Violet had been long at sea, the opinion of the little public on board of the steam-packet had undergone a considerable change. At first, none would eat at the same board with a suspected murderess. Mothers almost shrieked as they tore away the children who were attracted by her sweet face—children had always loved her—and came sidling shyly up to the beautiful lady who sat all alone, as if forsaken of all. The virtuous shrank from contact with her, as though she had carried the contagion of the plague in the hem of her robe. But soon there were two parties in the ship—the champions of Violet, and the partisans against her; and anon most of these latter lost the rancour of their hostility to her, and wavered in their minds as to her guilt. The worst that could be told of her had been told. But the first shock and horror of the accusation spent, somewhat of a reaction set

in. Suppose, so men and women said, the charge were false—the mere product of obvious malignity and of baffled greed; suppose Dashwood's written promise to have been a forgery, or if not so, to have borne a different construction from that damning one first put upon it: or, again, presume that the captain's intentions were evil, but not understood by this pure, simply nurtured girl, and that what seemed to others a fiendish compact, appeared to her as a mere pledge to marry, the condition being overlooked. An unfortunate accident—that was what she had called it from the first—denying, too, her own presence on the scene until the boy was already beyond reach, in the swirling waters towards which his drunken attendant had permitted him to stray alone—suppose, and it well might be so—that the catastrophe were no more than this, how cruel, how undeserved, was Miss Maybrook's present position!

Had Violet said more in her own defence, the disputatious element which lurks in us all, to a greater or less degree, might have become aroused. But she said very little, and those who took up the cudgels in her behalf did not, as often occurs, find their chief hindrance in her rash assertions or imprudent admissions. What was positively known of her antecedents was all good. Her reputation was without stain. She had tended the perishing poor in a time of selfish panic. In misadventures by flood and field, she had saved lives at no light risk to her own. Mrs Philip Dashwood, of whom she spoke in terms of affection, had been deeply attached to her; Lady Livingston, whose purloined will she had given back into proper keeping, when snatched from the hands of the thief, had bequeathed her money; little Charley had been her loyal, tiny friend. The telegraph had already wafted from each side of the Atlantic much information which had found its way into print, but although gossiping tongues had been let loose, nothing to Miss Maybrook's discredit had been elicited. On the contrary, her former schoolfellows, her former patronesses, were up in arms, and could the old English ordeal have been revived, Violet need have had little fear of walking barefooted and blindfold among the red-hot ploughshares, so many compurgators would have started forward to share her trial. Whose memory could rake up cruelty or baseness against her? She was Truth itself—free from all that degrades, all that soils, a reputation. Honest as the day, she had given good counsel to many a flighty young belle of the Canadian ball-rooms; and twenty tongues could avouch that she had striven to save even Aphy Larpet from her *liaison* with her betrayer.

Then came the storm. There was, as the song says, work for the men, weeping for the women. The male passengers were compelled by the urgency of the common peril to bear a hand, for hours together, at the pumps. Seams had opened, rivets started; there was more water in the hold than a careful ship's carpenter likes to gauge with line and plummet; the engines strained their steel thaws and sinews in fighting against the mountain waves and raging wind; the vessel groaned and quivered like a sentient thing in pain; six strong arms were not too many at the wheel; the canvas spread was but a storm-jib and storm-sail of the stoutest web and scantiest surface; it was hardly possible to keep the *Quebec* under steerage-way; no idlers could be spared. Cook and steward had to

toil with the rest of the crew. There was no time to nurse sick passengers, or to allay the fears of the timid.

In that emergency, Violet Maybrook had won golden opinions from all. Her spirit had actually appeared to rise at the imminence of the danger, but hers was the self-imposed task of soothing the terrified, and ministering to such as lay, ill and helpless, in the state-rooms which they never thought to quit alive. More than one of her own sex, who had been severe in judging her, was smitten to the heart at the sight of her frank and gentle kindness, and clung, shuddering, to her firm hand, as the tumult and the cries on deck seemed to indicate the nearness of the final disaster. The frightened children could be comforted by her, when they paid little heed to the feeble exhortations of their alarmed parents. But what she liked best was to be on deck, where no woman, save her, was seen throughout that terrible weather, her dark hair blowing wildly to and fro in the gale, and the drenching clouds of white spray flying around her. She was a favourite with the old commander of the ship—the very captain who had taken charge of her on the voyage to England the year before—and he had not the heart to send her below in the unceremonious fashion in which he would have ordered another to get out of harm's way. 'All I bargain for, my dear,' he said gruffly, 'is, that when the sea comes aboard of us, you'll remember to get hold of a shroud, or a ringbolt, or something that will bear clinging to; and keep your grip until the water runs off again. You're not a chicken-heart, I know that well enough, but keep cool when we ship more brine than is good for us.'

Nor was Violet a drone in the hive. Her strength allowed her to be of no use where hard labour was in question, but the rugged forecastle men more than once set up a cheer of hearty admiration as they saw her fearless face and graceful figure amongst them, and worked the more valiantly, because their toil was done beneath the eyes of one so lovely and so insensible to danger. 'Have a care, Miss; for the love of Heaven, have a care!' was the cry, more than once, when some curling giant of a wave arched his foamy neck, like a wrathful serpent, over the ship's bows, and sent a very mill-race of seething water from stem to stern along the deck, washing away with it every loose object. But the sailors found before long that Violet's activity and presence of mind were safeguards that never failed her, and in their rough approval of her brave spirit and rare beauty, they gave her the name of the 'Luck of the Ship.' Nor was she less popular when she volunteered to serve out the rations of hot grog, for the distribution of which a man could ill be spared, to the passengers and seamen on duty at the clanking chain-pumps; with a kindly word of encouragement for those who were beginning to despair of keeping the leak under and the vessel afloat.

The storm was over now. The cyclone had gone whirling on to strew the seas with havoc elsewhere, and the *Quebec*, plugged and stopped, and bolted afresh, as to the damaged portion of her hull, was able to complete her voyage, with smooth water and light breezes. Cape Race, with its cap of cloud and mantle of fogs, that grisly sentinel that is thrust out so far, as the outpost of North America, was safely passed. So

was Cape Breton. Those were the savage cliffs of Anticosti that frowned, to the right, across the Gulf of the St Lawrence. To the left lay the shores of New Brunswick. The weather was clear; the engines worked well; yet a little, and the steamer would be breasting the swift stream of the mighty river that afforded a broad highway for the sharp keel to traverse. But what Violet had done, while yet the tempest strove for the mastery with all that centuries of patient progress have enabled weak man to construct, and almost conquered, was not forgotten when the haven was near, and the perils of the voyage at an end. An illogical half-belief in her innocence had grown up, and she was treated with a strange blending of pity and respect by young and old. It would have been well for Miss Maybrook if the living freight of the *Quebec* had been there and then impelled as a jury to decide upon her case. The praise she had deservedly won, went far to prove to those around her that she was wrongfully accused of that great and heinous crime for which she was soon to take her trial.

From the first, she had been allowed almost entire liberty on board. There was a detective officer on board—no other than our old friend Sergeant Flint—whose errand would not be discharged until he should hand over the person of his prisoner to the colonial authorities. But, beyond keeping an eye upon her movements during the earlier portion of the voyage, the policeman in no way attempted to place her under any species of restraint; nor would the tough old skipper, naturally the autocrat of his own craft, have sanctioned any unnecessary harshness towards a passenger in Violet's position. A ship is, indeed, of all jails, the most difficult to escape from, and hence the comparative liberty granted to Miss Maybrook. It so happened, too, that poor Sergeant Flint was as abject a sufferer from sea-sickness—that capricious malady, which often spares the frail, to fasten its fangs on some robust victim whose bodily vigour contrasts oddly with the prostration which accompanies the complaint—as the feeblest woman on board. He had taken his 'spell' at pumping with the rest, but was scarcely fit for the labour, or to keep his footing on the slippery slope of the wet and heaving deck, and altogether cut as poor a figure during the storm as Robin Hood, in the old ballad, is rhythmically reported to have done as a fisherman on the gray waters of the North Sea. And when the fine weather returned, and the American shores were visible, the sergeant made no effort to reassert his authority over so popular a prisoner as Violet, who was free to do as she pleased during the short remainder of the voyage.

The *Quebec* was now sailing past Anticosti, a favouring wind aiding the engines in forcing her along, swiftly and smoothly; overhead, a sky of unclouded splendour. It was Sunday, and the captain, in accordance with the good old sea-going custom, had read aloud the service for the day to crew and passengers. There was something unusually solemn in the performance of this simple religious duty, when all hearts were as yet softened by the remembrance of the great peril so narrowly eluded, of having been snatched, as it were, from the brink of the ever-yawning grave that hungers for the bodies of shipwrecked men. There was no lack of reverence among the motley congregation on deck; and once or twice, when the

old skipper's voice trembled a little in repeating the words of some prayer or thanksgiving easily applicable to their late situation, the sobs of kneeling women could be distinctly heard. This brief ceremony took place in the morning; but in the evening, as the passengers gathered in the cabin, the grateful breeze blowing freshly in through the open skylights, it occurred to some one to request the captain to read a chapter of the Bible aloud; and with this petition he complied with a good grace, simply opening the volume that lay on the table beside him, and reading the portion of the New Testament on which his eyes fell.

This lecture—a real lecture, not the oration which we know by the name—did not last very long. It comprised, amongst other details, the succinct and enthralling story of the miserable ending of Judas Iscariot. Those few lines, coupled with a few earlier lines in the sacred history, served to present such an historical portrait of the recreant apostle as is rare in its completeness. The shrewd, mean, false man of the world; he who 'bore the bag, and kept what was put therein;' the greedy dissembler, the traitor cheaply bought when treason commanded a better market-price than lip-service, must yet have had a heart beneath the sad-coloured gabardine in the ample bosom of which he wrapped his thirty pieces of blood-bought silver. Either a genuine remorse, or the spiritual fear to which a Jew of old Jerusalem was especially liable, must have wrought powerfully upon a nature intrinsically base, perhaps, but not wholly hardened; for—'he went out and hanged himself,' leaving the silver coins, on which his haggard eyes beheld the rust of innocent blood, a shining heap on the floor of the Sanhedrim council-chamber. 'He went out and hanged himself.' Softly Violet's lips murmured the words, long after the book was closed, and the reader gone to attend to his duties. 'He went out and hanged himself.' She was strangely silent for some time after this, sitting a little apart, as her custom was, from the rest of the company, and saying little in answer to what was addressed to her. And presently she went on deck.

The ship was going steadily and well upon her course, but by no means so rapidly as in the forenoon. The chief engineer had reported that some part of the machinery, strained in the recent hurricane, when fires were piled up to their fiercest, and every ounce of available work, so to speak, screwed out of the hard-working mechanism that was the heart of the vessel, stood in need of careful management. At half-speed, therefore, the *Quebec* pressed on, and still it was darkling Anticosti, always Anticosti, that loomed upon the starboard bow. The stars were shining white, and the moon, a thin silvery crescent, glimmered in the violet sky. Below, millions of phosphorescent sparks, each with a life, each eager to devour some microscopic prey, each itself the food of mightier creatures of the deep, turned the tiny wavelets to ripples of lambent flame. Now and then the splash of a flying-fish, that had ventured far north that summer through the warm waters of the Gulf Stream, or the dash of a bonito amidst a glittering shoal of little fish, broke the silence. The foam swirled away from beneath the vessel's counter, a long white line that might be traced far off upon the sparkling, softly swelling sea.

'He went out and hanged himself.' A third, and yet a fourth time, did Violet repeat these

words. They seemed, for her, to possess some singular fascination.

The ship glided on. To-morrow she would sight the estuary of the great river; and in a day or two, passing between bluffs and forests, between wheat-field and pasture, between town and village, would thread her way up stream, past the fortress-city that Wolfe died to win, and Montcalm to defend, past islet and farm, to Montreal itself. How had the world changed towards Violet Maybrook since the same vessel bore her, last autumn, Europe-wards! Her venture was made, the game lost, the penalty to be paid. 'And he went out and hanged himself.'

She was almost alone, now, on deck. There were two or three knots of passengers aft of the mast, and, forward, some of the crew were collected on the forecastle. There were the look-outs and the helmsman, and the men of the watch, and their officer; but they took no heed of her. Standing beside the bulwarks, she looked across the stretch of sea to where lay the rugged coast of Anticosti, black, inhospitable, abhorred of mariners. There it lay, the giant island, cold, pitiless, barren, with its rocky verge against which so many ships have been beaten to splinters, its frozen highlands where life is not, its hungry wilderness where many a wrecked sailor has stretched him out to die. Anticosti! one of those untamed, incurably savage spots of earth of which men make no profit.

'Yes; it is better so,' murmured the girl, bending over the side-rail, and smiling at the gently swelling waves that rose up, as if to meet her; 'far better so.' And she raised her head, and fixed her eyes first on the gaunt cliffs and foam-flecked shoals of Anticosti, then on a white, sinuous streak of swiftly flowing water, like a silvery path that twisted, serpentine, through the phosphorescent azure of the sea.

'I have thought of this place,' she said dreamily, 'ever since I passed it before.' Then she smiled again.

'Sleeping and waking'—such were her whispered words—'I have seen what I see now, often, and have felt, I knew not why, that here should be my grave—not under the grass and the daisies, where the white headstone should tell my name to those who have heard my story; and not, oh, not among the mildewed stones of the prison, where they would lay me. Whither, I wonder, would yonder eddy carry a drowned wretch? To some gaunt, shingly beach, no doubt; or perchance some rock-screened cove, on yonder cruel shore of Anticosti, where the screaming sea-birds should pipe their shrill requiem over the prey; and strange uncouth creatures should crawl forth from under beetling wave-washed stones to claim their share of the prize. What, to them—to the grim things of claws and teeth, and quivering feelers—to their monstrous brethren with long loose arms that twine around captured wreck, to crab, and cuttlefish, and sea-urchin, and medusa, are white limbs, and eyes that were bright once, and the dead daintiness of a rounded cheek, and the wild tangles of streaming hair that mingle with the sea-weed, as in mockery, at every heave of the wave! Yes; it is better so. It is fittest this way. "And he went out and hanged himself!"'

She bent far over the side-rail as she spoke those last words.

'A man overboard!' shouted the helmsman,

whose quick ear had caught the heavy splashing sound, and the sailors of the watch started forward in a moment, at the call.

'Back the engines there!' commanded the officer in charge of the deck. 'Quick, give her a turn to port, you at the wheel; and see to clear away the life-buoy, some of you! Can you see anything, Jem?'

This last question being addressed to one of the look-out men, who had sprung with cat-like agility into the rigging.

'Ay, ay, sir—yonder, where the eddy is. I think it's a woman,' answered the sailor.

'A woman!—it must be the lady who was alone here—Miss Maybrook, if I mistake not!' cried one of the passengers, hurrying up, and there was a shriek of female voices. 'Yes, the poor unhappy girl—yonder; see where her light-coloured dress shews just above the water. Oh, save her, save her!'

The captain was on deck now, and most of those below came rushing up, with loud outcries and exclamations of horror.

'Yes. Lower away a boat there! Quick, you lubbers! Pitch over another life-buoy, and another; and you, Mr Jones, keep her a point nearer shore, d'ye hear? The current runs like a mill-slucie.'

The skipper's orders were obeyed promptly, willingly. Scarcely had the boat, swinging from the fall-tackles, touched the water before the ready volunteers had dropped as by magic into their places.

'Give way, boys!' exclaimed the officer, as he grasped the tiller-lines, and the pliant ash-staves went feathering and flashing through the waves, the oarsmen bending to their work as if their thaws and sinews were of steel. Four life-buoys were dancing on the surface of the water, the blue light attached to each irradiating the sea with a ghastly flare that lit up the darkling stretch of sea.

With engines barely pulsating, the steam-ship glided towards the place where Violet's floating form had been last seen, white and indistinct, like a dead swan borne by a swirl of eddying water, her light dress supporting her for a moment.

It was all in vain. In vain they called her name; in vain they burned fresh lights, and threw out fresh life-buoys, and brought the steamer nearer and nearer in, while the sound of lamenting voices grew loud on board, and a second boat, at the urgent entreaty of the passengers, was manned and lowered. But though the boats were pulled hither and thither, the sailors eagerly scanning every foot of the phosphorescent water that might afford a diver a chance, should a submerged human form be seen dimly through the waves, nothing was found; and at a late hour they rested, baffled, after their fruitless search. As the old captain had said, the current set strongly in towards Anticosti—strong, swift, pitiless, as the Necessity or Destiny in whose inexorable mandates the all-doubting Greeks believed. After a long delay, the *Quebec* pursued her voyage; but there was to be no trial at Montreal, no prisoner for Sergeant Flint to surrender to colonial justice. It was a higher tribunal before which Violet Maybrook would have to plead, and before its eternal bar she had hurried, poor, wayward rebel that she was. Lost! lost! and, until the Judgment Day, to be seen no more of men.

CHAPTER XLII.—BROUGHT TOGETHER.

Whitborne, always pretty, looked its best when Oswald reached it, towards noon, on one of those days when the bright south coast of England is seen to the best advantage: a blue sky mirrored in the blue sea; a sparkling flood of sunshine pouring down among the green nut-boughs and trailing wild-roses of the deep lanes, lighting up every variety of tint among the coloured pebbles of the beach, and rendering translucent the gold-green oak-leaves of the coppice in the hollow of the bleak down. There was a brisk breeze, too, mottling the wide-spread water with pearly flecks of foam, and fanning the cheeks of the loiterers who were enjoying the pleasures of their hard-won indolence as they basked upon the shingle, and concentrated the resources of the lately overtasked intellect on the blameless pastime of flinging smooth stones into the sea. There was a holiday aspect even in the red or brown sailed fishing-smacks that beat up against the wind, and the revenue vessel in the offing had quite a romantic air, with her taut rigging and spotless canvas, like a white-winged bird of prey.

When Oswald approached the Dingle, he thought that he had never yet done justice to the beauty or the peaceful influences of the place. On the occasion of his previous visits, he had merely regarded the widow's house as a sea-side residence in an out-of-the-way situation, and the jar and conflict of human passions and human interests had rendered him insensible to the quiet loveliness of that sweet retreat which Mrs Dashwood had elected for her home. But now he was happy, and in a mood to be pleased with everything, and it seemed hard to him to believe that this fairy-like little domain, where it appeared as if nothing that was evil could enter, could have been the scene of Aphrodite Larpent's bitter accusation, of Violet Maybrook's arrest, of the stormy scene at the reading of the recovered will. Surely, such events must have partaken of the nature of a bad dream, of some vision of the night that, when we wake, leaves a chill in our veins, a vague terror in our bewildered minds, but that a few minutes of healthy waking life suffice to dissipate.

'Beatrice!'—'Oswald!' It was all they said, for Beatrice, who had watched for his coming, had hurried down to meet her lover at the garden-gate, and their hands were linked together, and their eyes met. Whose memory cannot call back those delicious moments that might have been vulgarly measured as seconds, or as hours, or as aeons of ages, when space was of small account, and time annihilated, and it seemed as though the gazing eyes could never take their fill of looking into the love-light shining from those other dear eyes opposite! Ah, well! this is a work-a-day world, after all, and as it has been truly said—to the confusion of the simple Epicureanism of some British lotus-eaters—that life cannot be all beer and skittles, so it cannot consist wholly of love-making. Even the wild birds sing their little hearts out in tremulous, quivering, crowded melody but once a year, when the spring plumage is new, and food and shelter are plenty, and the anxious parents of last season are free to mate again, and eager to undertake the cares of nest-keeping.

'Beatrice!'—'Oswald!' How little it was to say,

and yet how much may be conveyed by the artless intonation of so few syllables! No shorthand writer would indeed presume to give a *verbatim* report of the conversation of lovers; and if he did, the talk would poorly repay the stenographer's toil, so much is implied, so little spoken, in that curious language which they alone can use.

Then they remembered the world once more, and that they were not Ferdinand and Miranda on Prospero's enchanted island, and Beatrice blushed, and Oswald looked embarrassed, and their hands separated again, and Oswald opened the gate, and up the smooth garden-path they walked together to the house. They talked, but it seemed to both as if the true eloquence had been expended at that almost mute meeting of theirs. It had been one of those moments to which fond husbands and wives look back now and then, along the vista of years of wedded happiness, each to ask each that question—'Don't you remember?' which old schoolfellows, old friends, ay, and old sweethearts, are so ready with. They were happy now, those two, but not in that serene fashion that belongs only to secure possession. They had been parted long, and as it had seemed, hopelessly, and theirs were still the doubts and shapeless fears and sense of uncertainty, which make up much of the sum-total of the bliss of those who love. But the mention of the widow's name recalled Oswald Charlton and Beatrice Fleming to the fact that there were others near whose troubles and trials were by no means over.

'Mrs Dashwood is not ill now—or so, at least, she thinks,' said Beatrice sadly, in answer to the new-comer's inquiry. 'But I sometimes fear that she will never quite recover the blow; her former grief has been so cruelly renewed, poor thing, that she weeps for the child as if he had been taken from her but yesterday; and, besides, she had such a high opinion of Miss Maybrook, and so beautiful a trust in her affection for the child, and for her. I do not believe that she will ever smile again, but she is too good and gentle for sorrow ever to render her selfish.'

'It was a sad and terrible affair from first to last,' said the young barrister, lowering his voice as they drew near the door. 'I cannot say that I ever liked Miss Maybrook when I met her at the Fountains. There was something unnatural, to my fancy, in seeing so remarkable a person filling the duties of so trivial a position, and her presence seemed to introduce a tragic element into the household. Still, she had rare gifts of courage, grace, and beauty, and dreadful as was the crime laid to her charge, I can imagine her, under a different set of circumstances, acting nobly and well. There is an opinion afloat that the evidence against her may break down; although Sir Frederick's flight has confirmed the impression against both.'

'Yes, I never thought of it from then till now,' exclaimed Beatrice suddenly; 'there must have been a secret understanding between my cousin and Miss Maybrook from the first. Poor Lady Livingston once thought so, although her suspicions were easily lulled to rest.' And she related to Oswald the history of the casual glimpse which she had had of Violet and Dashwood standing together, by the boat-house, beside the river at Richmond, and how the dowager's attempt to detect the double-dealing of her young dependant

had been frustrated by the ready wit and prompt activity of the latter. Oswald shook his head.

'I have little doubt,' he said, 'that the informer's narrative is essentially true. Still, were it not for this poor lady, I could find it in my heart, for the sake of others, that the guilty should be left to the vengeance of Heaven—not punished here.'

'She has no vindictive feeling,' whispered Beatrice, as they passed in. 'In her abiding sorrow there seems no room for hate against the wicked doer of that evil deed, or against the treacherous kinsman who abused her hospitality as he planned it. I have not heard her use one word in all her weeping which implied a longing to be revenged for her great loss. But she is here to meet us.'

And indeed it was the widowed wife, the bereaved mother, in the mourning attire which since the child's death she had never ceased to wear—but looking strangely aged since first she offered a home to Beatrice on the dowager's death, and with a face that was waxen white, and thin hands that trembled. She was calm, now, however, although her voice shook a little as she said to Oswald:

'I have come, you see, to bid you welcome here, and to wish you joy. Dear Beatrice has told me everything. I am sure I hope, with all my heart, that you two will be happy. You may be thought fortunate, Mr Charlton, in having won the love of one of the sweetest, truest wives that ever man had, and if—my prayers'—She stopped, and pressed her hand to her side, as if a sudden pang had recalled to her the irreparable loss that for an instant she had seemed to forget; but in a moment more she resumed: 'I hope you will be married from my house—and soon. Beatrice, in her tender sympathy, was for staying here to nurse and care for me for a long time—the rest of the year, I think—before forming other arrangements; but I must not allow my misfortunes to cloud the innocent happiness of my young friends—for I trust to have your friendship too, Mr Charlton—so I shall claim to have a voice in your plans. Now, I will leave you to talk them over, for a while, but remember, let there be no sacrifice made for me!' And as she spoke, she clasped her thin hands together, and her lips moved silently, as if in the act of blessing, while she looked on them with her pure, gentle eyes, and then turned and walked slowly and feebly away.

'She looks sadly ill and altered,' whispered Beatrice; 'but how good and thoughtful she is; there is no repining aroused in her wounded heart by the sight of our happiness, for we are happy now, dear.'

'Yes, darling,' answered Oswald, as he drew her towards him and stooped to kiss her cheek; 'and she was right, too, to say that I had reason to be proud of the prize which I, unworthy as I am, have drawn in the lottery of life.'

Little remains to be told. The successive deaths of Bruce Larpent and of Violet Maybrook removed from human punishment two of those implicated respectively in the assault on Mr Goodeve, and in the suppression of the heir to the Dashwood baronetcy. The senior partner in the eminent firm of Goodeve and Glegg has never recovered from the rough handling and the heavy fall which he sustained when garrotted, yet his name still heads the bills of costs which clients receive; while the

gray-haired child that it belongs to sits nodding feebly in his easy-chair—surrounded by the musical instruments on which at intervals he makes a feeble feint of preparing to play, and immensely interested by the newspaper paragraphs assiduously read out to him by his affectionate daughters, both of whom are at home, disputing the inheritance for the division of which they will not long have to wait.

Aphy Larpent paid the penalty which in this world sometimes attaches to being too clever. Had she come frankly into the arrangements of the Treasury lawyers, she might have earned, by her evidence against Violet on the charge of murder, practical impunity for her own lesser misdoings. But she stood out for better terms, haggling for compensation and expenses before she would consent to embark for Canada, and thoroughly disgusting the police and the Crown solicitors by her pertinacity in bargaining, and the jealous animosity which she betrayed against Violet, her early friend. The news of Violet's death, coupled with Dashwood's disappearance, turned the tables, and Aphrodite Larpent, no longer needed in the witness-box at Montreal, was placed in the dock of the Central Criminal Court, and there arraigned on an indictment of which the principal count was the unlawful possession of the diamond and sapphire cross found among her effects, and which was proved to have been the property of the Dowager Lady Livingston. She was sentenced for a term of seven years, and has as yet the larger portion of her sentence to work out before she again issues forth into the world.

Oswald and Beatrice are married long since, and they live, loving and beloved. The poor of Heavtree have reason to bless the day that delivered them from their short subjection to the squire of Pinchbeck, which close-fisted person retired discomfited to Lincolnshire; while Mr and Mrs Charlton have since then contrived to make themselves friends to small and great in that country-side, and are reckoned, both in Warwickshire and at Richmond, as the very type of a good and graceful lady and a generous, true-hearted gentleman.

So brief a time has elapsed since the date of these events, that it is still possible to borrow money from the Behemoth, to lose a little of it at cards or billiards to jovial Major Raffington, to have one's pulse felt by smooth old Sir Joseph Doublefee, or to be semi-strangled in a dark corner by the Ugly One and Craney. If we break the law, Sergeant Flint and Superintendent Starkey, staunch lime-dogs of Scotland Yard, are still ready to be slipped on our traces. Should we be lucky enough to be invited, we may still be crushed and trodden on in the attempt to ascend the crowded stairs of Snowdon or Blunderbore House, when her Grace or the Marchioness are hospitably at home to half-fashionable London. Mrs Gulp yet spasmodically lets lodgings in Great Eldon Street; and Mrs General Buckram, at Hampton Court, is always happy to receive a visit from any one armed with the necessary introduction, and to discuss the newest gossip and the alarming degeneracy of 'society.'

In Whitborne churchyard, a white headstone bears the name of Mrs Philip Dashwood.

And in the Far West of that wilder America that lies beyond the Rocky Mountains, wanders a

desperate, broken man, whom some take to be of English birth, though of no credit to the land of his origin, since a fiercer or a more profligate scoundrel does not range those regions. He is known by several names—was called Gibson in Arizona, Cook in California, and by many another alias at the mines or in the cities, where he roves, restless, as if he were pursued by the Furies; and when he has drunk more deeply than usual, mutters of ugly secrets that even his unscrupulous associates do not care to hear. Knave, duellist, gambler he is known to be, and suspected to be worse; and therefore looked askance upon as his handsome, reckless face appears in a new town. Some day his sin will find him out, and, shot like a dog in some ignoble tavern brawl, or hanged like a dog on a tree of the lynchers' choosing, there will be an end of Frederick Dashwood.

THE END.

ABOUT RETRIEVERS.

HAVING been a dog-fancier from my youth upwards, I should like to say a little about the retriever, which is, to my mind, by far the most universally sagacious of the tribe. I am never without two or three specimens of the animal to help me in my shooting operations, and at present I may speak of Bob as being at the head of the list.

Bob made his appearance at the early age of about two months old, or thereabouts, in a butcher's cart. I do not know to what indignities he was exposed between the period of his birth and his being weaned, but certain it is that he has ever borne a rooted and offensive dislike to tradesmen's carts in general, and to butchers' in particular. Tramps, too, are the object of much display of temper. Don't talk to me of mere instinct; that animal knows the difference between a tramp and an honest, steady workman better than anybody. So high are his own notions of integrity, that even if we are walking miles distant from home, it is not an easy matter to prevent Bob from attacking a tramp if one comes in his way.

As to his pedigree, he is the son of Sam, which was the son of Wisdom, which was the son of Dash. Dash was one of those wonderful beings who live once in a generation, rather to shew to what a height breeding may go, than as ordinary creatures. The special use of a retriever, as is well known, is to search for and pick up the game that has fallen. He accordingly must not only be a good finder but a good carrier. If possessing proper natural genius, he may be easily educated to carry a glove, a pocket-handkerchief, or any other trifle. I have even known a retriever able to carry a written order to a particular tradesman, and faithfully bring back an answer. Dash was a retriever of this sort—a most accomplished dog. He would retrieve a glove or a pocket-handkerchief if he had to go a day's journey for it; and to see him on the moors circumventing an old cock-grouse near the end of the season, beats all description. Dash's day was almost over when I knew him,

and although he would occasionally put a pack of meaner mortals to shame, his feats of extraordinary skill were getting few and far between. The prettiest thing I ever saw him do myself was on an occasion when a partridge was wounded by one of the party, but apparently not mortally so. Dash stood at 'tention,' his paws lightly but firmly planted on the ground, and his head on one side, with his ears cocked. He remained thus for two or three minutes, long after the birds had disappeared over the brow of the hill. He then started off in pursuit, and came back in a short time with the bird in his mouth. He had evidently waited until he heard the bird flop on the ground, dead or dying.

Wisdom, the son of Dash, I am sorry to say, belied his name; he was a stupid, heavy animal, and degenerated at length into the position of watch-dog in the stable-yard. The glories of the family, thus for a short time tarnished by the inaction of Wisdom, were, however, greatly revived in Sam, who, if he had come after Dash, would have been a marvellous dog too. As an instance of the practical turn which Sam's intellect took, I may relate the following anecdote: One evening his master went to a friend's house to escort his sister home, and, after remaining half an hour or so, went away with his sister, but forgetting to call Sam, who lay asleep under the hall-table. Samuel, being aroused by the servants when they came to lock up the house for the night, went home in high dudgeon, maintaining a dignified silence for several days. Another evening shortly afterwards my friend had the same errand to perform, and Sam again condescended to accompany him. On leaving the house, his master did not forget to ask where he was, and was informed that he was, as usual, asleep under the hall-table. 'But,' said the servant, 'he is determined you shan't go without him to-night.' On looking under the table, Sam was discovered fast asleep, but with my friend's cap and stick under his muzzle!

Sam was, however, so little an improvement on Wisdom, that it was thought necessary to import some new blood into the family; and of the union thus achieved, Bob is the result. What, as I have said before, were the conditions of the first eight weeks of this animal's career, I know not; but he is certainly the handsomest of all dogs since the days of Dash. Coming here as a puppy, and brought up with the children, he has the sweetest of tempers; and if increasing years have added a dignity to his deportment which Beauty has not, it certainly does not detract from his appearance. When visitors come to the house, he permits them to pat him to some extent, but he receives the attention rather as proper homage than as anything pleasant, and has no scruple in saying when he has had enough of it. Being now upwards of nine years old, he has discarded active gamboling, save, as has been said before, when there is an accumulation of irritation in a portion of his skin, or on other occasions of a like nature; but he was known recently

to fetch a stick off the pond, to oblige a little gipsy of a niece of mine. It was done, however, with so much deliberation, and so decidedly regarded as a favour, that the hint was taken, and the request was not repeated.

But what shall we say of Beauty, the curly-haired, hazel-eyed little siren? I found the little monkey about four years ago on the road-side, deserted by some brute or another, and evidently not more than three weeks old. I put her in my pocket, and carried her home, and fed her with warm milk off the point of my finger. She had a long struggle for life, but conquered in the end, and grew into a wonderful beauty. She is very small, being not much larger than a spaniel, but her points are perfect. Although nearly four years of age, she is as lively still as a puppy, and honest Bob often looks with astonishment, but not with disfavour, on her perpetual gambols.

Living as she has done with the children, of course she has been taught all sorts of tricks. My irreverent first-born, thinking to instil good principles into her, taught her that she should not eat if she was told it is Friday. So perfect is she now, that she will drop the most delicious morsel out of her mouth if any one says it is Friday, and only take it up again when she is assured by some one (on whom she can rely) that it is Sunday. Being a spoiled pet all her life, she has learned none of the sterner qualities, and makes a poor show in a turnip-field. She looks upon a day's shooting as something got up entirely for her own amusement, and much disconcerts gamekeepers and dogs like Bob by her inattention to the demands of sport. She much prefers leaping on an old gentleman's shoulders, and walking off with his hat, to stalking the largest covey of partridges that ever settled in stubble. I am afraid she is incorrigible; but I cannot help owning that the fault is my own, for we never had the heart to let her go through the flogging necessary to train the best dogs. Her mouth is as soft as butter, and when she can be made to take a serious view of anything, she carries beautifully without making a single mark, however soft the article may be. She carries an egg very well indeed, if any one is watching her; but if she thinks she is unobserved, her partiality for its contents overcomes her, and she transfers them from the shell to her own mouth. Last year, we were attempting to hatch and rear two or three settings of eggs of a very rare and peculiar kind of ducks, and Miss Beauty, who had some family matters of her own to attend to at the time, was locked up in the inclosure where their pond is. Every morning the two or three nests were regularly empty, and suspicion fell on every one about the place in his turn. Old Charlie, my handy man, got particular injunctions to watch the place well, because, as I said to him, it must be some one about the place, as Beauty would never let a strange thief get in. The place was accordingly watched, and at length Charlie came and said he had caught the delinquent. This was none other than the gardener's boy; about whom, however, an elaborate alibi was set up immediately, and attested beyond the possibility of doubt. I then determined to watch the nests myself, and, putting an egg in one of them, I withdrew to a room in the house, having a window which overlooked the scene. After waiting an hour or so, I saw Beauty come out of her kennel, go sniffing

about the place till she came to the nest with the egg in it. She looked surprised to see it there, gave a hasty look round, to see that no one was looking, and bolted it shell and all. I confess this was too much for me; I went down, armed with a whip, and gave her a sound flogging. I expressed to her my surprise that she who had been placed there partly as a custodian of the eggs against rats, &c. should have so degraded her trust; and upon my word, I think she knew what I said to her. We never lost another egg. Indeed, so anxious did she become about their safety, that she began scraping holes all round the pond—old rat-holes, which I had stopped up. At length she so tore the ground at the roots of a willow which hung over the pond, that I held a consultation with Charlie as to the advisability of putting her elsewhere. Next morning, however, that functionary came to me before breakfast, and said: 'I've found out what Beauty's scratching at, sir; there's a weasel in the 'ole, sir, right underneath that 'ere willow; but she can't get at it, sir, on account of them roots. I seed it this morning; and if we don't get it, sir, we shan't have many young ducks.' It was true; and Beauty accepted an apology for having been suspected of mischief.

At my feet, just now, alongside of Beauty, lies a bijou little black-and-tan English terrier, weighing about five pounds, and answering to the name of Mid—short for Semiramide—which name was playfully given to it as being the first one we could think of which, spelled in large capitals, was considerably larger than itself. In the lawn, at a respectful distance from Bob, and ever and anon trotting off to see what is going on in the stable, dozes Gyp, a very pure little Dandie, about whom a thousand stories might be told. Mop is near him; she is a French poodle, and her likeness to that stable implement gave her the name. And at the end of the group, basking in the sun, and dreaming of goodness knows what, lies a handsome St Bernard of enormous size. She came to me quite a puppy, and received the name of Buda, because in her growing days her appetite was so dreadfully large that I could think of no title more appropriate than that which serves for a capital of Hungary. But, handsome and docile and intelligent as Buda is, she never has had, and never will have, the same position in our domestic arrangements that Bob and Beauty have. 'The dog alone,' says the writer of a charming article on the Dog, in an old *Quarterly Review*, 'of all the brute creation, shews a perfect attachment, alone understands our wishes, adapts himself to our habits, waits upon our commands, associates with us as a friend.' This is true of dogs in general, but I think of sporting dogs in particular, and of retrievers in the highest degree. After them comes the shepherd's dog. The Newfoundland, the St Bernard, the Mastiff, are all exceedingly sagacious, but they lack that refining touch which a good education gives even to dogs. The collie-dog, with his homely teaching, does wonderful things, no doubt, and is both an assistant and a dear friend to the simple shepherd, his master; but he has not that polish which makes a man or a dog at home in any society. Beauty, for instance, without any training at all, is a first-rate sheep-dog, and will bring the few sheep in the plantation to order, whenever they are encroaching on the young trees. But I do not think that any but a very exceptional

sheep-dog could be got, without any training, to point, carry game, 'down charge,' and so forth, as Bob did in his infancy. Poor old Bob and little Beauty! They have made many a long trip with me over hill and dale, in summer and in winter; and many a pleasant memory do I have, and so I have little doubt have they, as I sit in the library of a winter's night, and they lie snoring at my feet.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

For them who like to anticipate pleasure, profit, or instruction, there will be gratification in reading the particulars of the Annual International Exhibition for the present year. We are promised a display of appliances used by civil engineers, architects, and builders, including the ingenious contrivances by which labour is saved, or results are multiplied. In association with these are cement and plaster works, sanitary apparatus, and scientific inventions and new discoveries, which seem to open a way for every kind of ingenuity. Of grates, stoves, and other contrivances for heating, all in actual operation, there will be a large show; and we may reasonably hope that, among the competitors, some will demonstrate perfect economy of coal with the amplest amount of warming. Saddlery, harness, and leather-work generally are to appear, including (as we may suppose) bookbinding—a good opportunity for any one who is not a mere imitator. Among manufactures, lace is to have a prominent place; the fine arts are to be represented; foreign countries are to exhibit their handicraft, as in former years; and, not least, there is to be a grand display of foreign wines. The samples will be stored in the spacious cellars underneath the Albert Hall. The notices to exhibitors are already published; and soon after these lines appear in print, the delivery of articles at South Kensington will commence.

It has often been said that man is more interested in mankind than in anything else; and it is admitted that the most attractive parts of museums are those containing specimens of the arts, industry, manners, and customs of ancient or existing nations. It happens, too, in the progress of civilisation, that some 'savage' nations are improved off the face of the earth, and leave no memorial. For these and other reasons, the Commissioners have resolved that the ethnology and geography of the British dominions, in all parts of the world, shall form part of this year's Exhibition, and be repeated year by year, until the whole empire shall be illustrated; and these collections are to remain as a permanent exhibition. In the words of the official notice, they are to include 'life-size and other figures representing the aboriginal inhabitants in their ordinary and gala costumes, models of their dwellings, samples of their domestic utensils, idols, weapons of war, boats and canoes, agricultural, musical, and manufacturing instruments and implements, samples of their industries,

and in general all objects tending to shew their present ethnological position and state of civilisation.' If such a collection as is here sketched could be properly classified, its value to science, as well as to the arts, would be so great as to justify any amount of labour in its preparation. The undertaking is to be led off with Western Africa, as that country happens to be for the moment unusually interesting.

It is predicted that the task of civilising Africa will fall to England. From Cape Colony, Englishmen are pushing their way up to the equator; and from Egypt it seems likely that they will push their way down to the equator, and there meet and spread their love of fair-play to east and west. But all concerned will do well to remember that in this civilising kingdom of ours more than twenty million gallons of spirits were drunk in nine months (January to September) of 1873, and we do hope it will be found possible to civilise Africa without this element.

A curious fact was mentioned at a meeting of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Chemical Society. Some five years ago, one of the great blast furnaces at Jarrow, when tapped in the usual way, poured forth nothing but slag. This was a surprise and disappointment, for iron had been put in, and iron ought to have flowed out. Repeated trials were made, but always with the same barren result, until at last the furnace was left to cool, after which it again became productive. Last year the furnace was pulled down, and then the mystery was explained. The original bottom of the furnace had melted in the intense heat; the molten iron ran down and melted the clay in which the foundations were dug, and in the cavity thus formed a solid mass of iron weighing one hundred and twenty tons was discovered. This was the iron that should have flowed out at the tap-hole. It had to be extracted in a more troublesome way, and was blown to pieces by dynamite.

Dynamite is a mixture of that dangerous explosive nitro-glycerine and clay. The clay is a peculiar kind, called Kieselguhr by the Germans, and is found in prodigious deposits near Lüneburg. It is described as nearly pure silica, consisting of shells of infusoria of past ages. The explosive force is amazing. Nine ounces fired on the top of a block of iron two feet six inches long and one foot six inches thick, split it completely in two. Another advantage of dynamite is, that it is not affected by damp, and can therefore be used for explosions under water.

The application of diamonds to mechanical purposes still progresses: we have in former pages noticed the stone-boring machine and stone-carving machine, and now another American inventor has started a diamond sawing-machine for cutting stone. The saw is hung in the usual way; the blade is of steel, but at intervals along this blade the diamonds are set in what are called 'cutter-blocks.' In actual work, it is found necessary to

give a peculiar movement to the saw: (1) a forward motion, which makes the cut; (2) a lifting motion, which takes the saw back to its starting-place without dragging out the diamonds; (3) a feeding motion, which lowers the saw to the proper place for making a new cut; and all these are susceptible of modification, according as the stone to be sawed is hard or soft. The diamond saw requires more power to work it than the ordinary saw; but in half an hour it will cut as deeply into a hard block of stone as the ordinary saw in half a day. If a diamond should by any chance become loose, it is caught in a wire-sieve, and can be reset after a little practice by any intelligent workman.

Ornamental iron-work can now be cut with a saw, in the same manner as fret-work. The saws are driven by steam, and they leave the edges of the iron clean and sharp without filing. Specimens were exhibited at a recent meeting of the Institute of British Architects. The process, which is described as inexpensive, is the invention of a mechanist in Paris.

The Institution of Civil Engineers opened their session with a paper on the Construction of Modern Locomotive Engines, from which we gather that the Great Northern express engine runs upon a bogie-frame with four wheels, instead of two leading wheels, as formerly; that the cylinders are outside, and larger than any ever before made in this country, being eighteen inches diameter, with twenty-eight inches length of stroke. This engine will draw a train weighing three hundred and fifty-six tons along a level at forty-five miles an hour, with a consumption of twenty-seven pounds of coal per hour. The cost of maintenance and renewal is estimated at twopence-halfpenny a mile for all the miles travelled by the engine. On the North-western line the cost is less than a penny a mile; on one of the Indian lines it amounts to more than threepence. The bogie-frame facilitates the passing over curves; and on engines with rigid frames a simple yet ingenious slide fitted to the axle-boxes allows the wheels to move sideways whenever the line makes a curve, and thus the engine is more likely to keep the track than on the old construction. These particulars of improvements which tend to promote the safety of railway travellers, will interest many readers.

Among recent patents is one for giving signals in a railway train, and for warning the carriages. Under the tender is fixed a condensed air-chamber, the pump of which can be worked by the engine or by hand. From this chamber a pipe stretches under the whole length of the train, with branches into the several compartments, where they terminate in stop-cocks. If, through any accident, the main pipe breaks, the condensed air screams loud and shrill, and warns guard and driver. The same noise is produced if a passenger opens one of the stop-cocks, and at the same time a small flag, blown out of the tube, indicates the compartment whence the alarm proceeds. For the warning, the con-

densed air is made to pass through the smoke-box, and thence to shallow chambers which form part of the carriage-floors, where they serve as foot-warmers, and heat the compartments.

A paper, 'On Auxiliary Power for Ocean Navigation,' has been read before the Institution of Naval Architects, in which the author recommends that vessels for long voyages should be sailing-ships fitted with an engine that should not burn more than a hundred tons of coal in a voyage round the world. In order not to interfere with the rate of sailing, the blades of the screw are to be made to fold close to the shaft when the engine is idle. By this means a voyage would be made at much less cost than by steam; for wind costs less than coal. The engine should be used only in calms or baffling winds. And now that the courses of the winds are better understood, the best course for a ship can be chosen. A ship has been known to sail from abreast of Kerguelen's Land to Melbourne in twelve days; and that is quick enough.

Another paper, read at the same Institution, 'On the Lowering of Boats,' will be interesting to landmen as well as sailors, considering how often the lives of passengers are sacrificed, because, in moments of danger, the boats cannot be properly lowered. The author of this paper, Mr E. J. Hill, described a plan by which one man, either on the deck of a ship or in the boat, can lower the boat on an even keel until it touches the water. The boat then immediately disengages itself from the tackles without any assistance on the man's part; and thus one great occasion of risk and difficulty is overcome. Provision is made so that the boat, while descending, cannot strike against the ship's side; and it can be hauled up as easily as it is lowered. Most sailors are agreed that the water, and the water only, should detach the boat from the lowering apparatus; and Mr Hill fully maintains that condition. It is undergoing a fair trial; for the boats of the *Challenger*, discovery-ship, and of the *Great Eastern*, are hung on his plan, of which full particulars may be read in the *Transactions* of the Institution above mentioned.

As connected with this we mention an American Self-breaking Hoisting and Lowering Machine, which can be used anywhere for the lifting or lowering of heavy weights, and is applicable to ships' boats. The inventor states that a boat laden with passengers and provisions can be raised or lowered by two men, and that it is impossible that one end should move faster than the other; which means that the boat always keeps an even keel.

Messrs Lawes and Gilbert, eminent among scientific agriculturists, have made long series of experiments on different crops, which are full of instruction for farmers generally. They have grown barley during twenty years in succession on the same land, and published the results in the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society*. From these we learn that an annual expenditure of less than three pounds per acre in artificial manures has yielded an average produce of six quarters of dressed

barley of good quality, and nearly a ton and a half of straw. The manures here referred to are sulphate of ammonia (Peruvian guano) and nitrate of soda; and any one who knows what farming is may easily calculate that the crop as above stated would yield a good profit.

Nearly fifty years ago, instruction in agriculture was introduced into the National Schools of Ireland; afterwards, special agricultural schools were established; these have led to the establishment of others, and now there are one hundred and fifteen in actual operation, the annual cost to the state being five pounds for each school. The number of boys under instruction is four thousand two hundred. Besides these, there are sixteen national schools which rank as model agricultural schools. Even in the remote and wild counties of the west, in Mayo and Donegal, the schools flourish, and the peasantry are finding out that cultivation is not a haphazard business, and that method and order lead to profit. In a country where there are about half a million small farmers, none of whom rents more than thirty acres, simple and sound instruction in agriculture could hardly fail to succeed. To aid in the work, an agricultural class-book was published many years ago, but has been superseded by an enlarged and comprehensive edition, of which fifty thousand copies have been sold through the national schools.

The effects of climate on agriculture can be studied with promise of highly interesting results in Ireland, owing to its remarkable climate, always moist, and never hot. Grass, and not grain, must be the staple under such circumstances. The population diminishes through emigration; grass requires but few labourers. 'A man and a dog to a thousand acres,' is an old saying in county Meath, where leagues of rich grazing-lands spread far and wide. The demand for grass is not likely to fail; for, as stated by a writer in the *Journal* above referred to, 'such a number of calves as have been reared this year (1873) in Ireland was never seen since the world began. The country positively swarms with calves.'

In one of the papers read during the present session before the Royal Society, a fact highly interesting to physiologists was made known by Professor Sanderson, of University College, London. It is, that vegetable fibre, when electrically excited, behaves in the same way as animal fibre. The learned professor's experiments were made on the leaf of *Dionea muscipula*, popularly known as Venus's Fly-trap, and the effect of the currents was identical with that observed in experiments on muscular fibre. Here we have confirmation of an oft-suggested proposition, that plant life and animal life have much in common.

Professor Williamson of Manchester, whose able researches on the fossil plants of the coal-measures have been recognised as of high value, delivered a lecture recently to the Natural History section of the Philosophical Society, in which he shewed that some of the best workers in science have been men of large business, who could only spare snatches of time for their investigation. He shewed further that much work is not to be expected from people in easy circumstances, and he remarked: 'Such facts make me very dubious as to the advantages which would arise from the special endowment of men whose sole occupation in life should be scientific inquiry.'

COULEUR DE ROSE.

WHEN Dawn first opens her sleepy eyes,
And looks drowsily over the world below,
Where the Alps tower proudly towards the skies,
A beautiful blush rests with rosy glow
On their topmost summits; the ruddy snow
Gleams rich and warm, as the shadows fade
And soften in sunshine, smiling low
'Neath the dull cold glacier, whose icy shade
Not even the noon-light may dare to invade.

In an eastern sea, where the wavelets curl
Softly and lovingly over the strand,
'Neath the self-same billow which hides the pearl,
Lies a lovely shell, such as Northern land
Ne'er chanced to imagine, nor mortal hand
Could venture to paint; for the wondrous hue
Of that tender carmine, the fairy wand
Of our mother Nature, so old, so new,
Has tinted alone 'neath the salt sea-blue.

Where the bulrush bows lowly his turbaned head,
And the fern droops soft by the streamlet's side,
Where the shallow glides lazily over its bed,
'Tis there that the kingfisher loves to hide
Her rose-pink eggs; there the timid bride
With loving instinct prepares her nest;
While her mate, swift skimming above the tide,
Dips his azure winglets and russet breast,
As he, arrow-like, darts on his finny quest.

Oh! full and warm is the fairy glow
Which the shell's rich colour brings out of the sea;
And pure and soft is the roseate snow,
As it glimmers on high when the shadows flee;
And the kingfisher's egg, pink as pink can be,
Is fair to behold; but a lovelier sight
Have I seen this eve, when, beneath the tree,
She gave me a rosebud, and, blushing bright
With a rosier red, whispered: 'Love! good-night!'

Next Saturday, February 7, 1874, will be commenced
a Novel, entitled

THE BEST OF HUSBANDS.

By the Author of *Found Dead*.

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